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Running head: Life satisfaction and loneliness of nursing students

# An investigation about the relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness of nursing students in Uşak University

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## Abstract

The purpose of the study is to investigate whether there is a relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness of nursing students. The universe of the study is the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class students (183 students) in the department of Medical Care in Health College in Uşak University. According to the results, there is a significant relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness. Results according to the Multiple Regression Analyze, there is a significant relationship between demographic variables and loneliness and little significant relationship between demographic variables and the level of life satisfaction.

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*Keywords:* loneless, life satisfaction, nursing students, uşak university

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Frequently, life satisfaction is defined that a person estimates positively its all life (Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin, 1985; Veenhoven, 1996). Life satisfaction is felt well himself. Life satisfaction was suggested by Neugarten in 1961, is obtained that compared expectations of a person and what it has got (Özer & Karabulut 2003). Basic aim of life is well being and life satisfaction. How the person appreciates its life shows to parallel with its life satisfaction. If the person is satisfied with its life, it usually can be happy in all life.

Life satisfaction brings along happiness. It is important that receive and not reach to goals and ideas for being happy in life of person (Rask et al., 2002). There are two main components about well-being. They are cognitive and emotional well-being. Cognitive component of life satisfaction determines the perception, in other words, the cognitive aspects of life satisfaction creates happiness (Dorahy et al., 1998). Emotional component includes positive and negative feelings of the individual's experience (Rask et al., 2002). According to Vara (1999), life satisfaction and quality of life interact with each other. It is thought that life satisfaction likely increases with the rising of the quality of life of the individual.

Different models have been developed related to life satisfaction. One of them is the person-environment suitability model. In this model, life satisfaction is associated with an individual's perception environmental

conditions, individual needs, abilities and aspirations. If the person equilibrates between his inner world and his external world, he can provide more satisfaction from life (Vara, 1999).

Life satisfaction in the literature related to research are considered that according to Myers and Diener (1995), the psychological situation of the person's experience (personal tendencies, close interpersonal relationships and cultural factors, such as) has more influence for explaining life satisfaction. However, it is obtained that life satisfaction was influenced socio-demographic factors such as marriage, family age, gender, work, employment, education and religion (Özer & Karabulut, 2003).

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Life satisfaction is great importance for carrying out communication with the person's environment healthily and providing necessary motivation in life. From the external world to receive the person's satisfaction should be able to interact with the environment. If he experiences problems with interpersonal interaction, feeling of loneliness and autism may occur. However, it is thought that the person's life satisfaction decreases when his communication with outside world becomes weak. For this reason, there is probably a relationship between the person's loneliness degree and life satisfaction.

There are many definitions about loneliness. Peplau and Perlman's (1982) definition is used mostly in the literature. According to them, loneliness is defined in such a way that "loneliness consists of an inconsistency which is between the existing social relationships and desirable social relationships of the person and is an unpleasant subjective and psychological state".

According to Cohen (2004), when the individuals have some problems with their social or psychological conditions, they need to get social support for overcoming the problems. Therefore, social support and social relations contribute a great deal for the individual's life. When they are supported by the others, both their problems can be solved easily and they do not feel loneliness.

While social support is important for all ages, to support college students have even greater importance. Because separation from the family, different cultures and different environment may cause to experience difficulties for students. It is very important that the person does not feel lonely himself for overcoming the various difficulties and knows that he has social supports for himself. The person copes with the problems which people can experience easily. This condition is more important for nursing students because of their profession. Because the nurses require to become more attention and sensitivity in the field of human health issues. According to Turkish Nurses Association, nursing description is shaped that nurses is a health discipline which is the person, family and the community's health and welfare protection, development and treatment of illness. For this reason, the health discipline is responsible from planning, organization and evaluation of nursing services and training of persons who fulfill health services (Öz, 2004).

It is thought that psychological conditions of nursing students are very important for completing the educational process of them fully-equipped. The feeling of loneliness can cause difficulties in coping with experiencing problems. This situation can lead to more negative perception their life and reduce their life satisfaction.

For this purpose, it is thought that life satisfaction of nursing students and feeling lonely themselves are searched with some their demographic information (such as class, mother and fathers' level of education, the structure of family, the number of sister and brother, level of income, the fact of suicide, the living in Uşak, the work style). The studies which are researched about these two variables (loneliness and life satisfaction) together, could not be found in the literature. Hence, this study is investigated whether there is a relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness of nursing students and how much can interact with some demographic information.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The universe of the study is the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class students in the department of Medical Care in Health College at Uşak University. 183 nursing students whose ages range are 18–22 years, participate in this study. The research was used within group desing.

## Materials and Procedure

Three instruments were used in the present study to collect data. A questionnaire about demographic variables; UCLA Loneliness Scale and Satisfaction With Life Scale. It was aimed to measure the nursing students' levels of loneliness and Life Satisfaction.

A questionnaire about demographic information includes questions about age, grade, mother and fathers' level of education, the structure of family, the number of sister and brother, level of income, residence in Uşak.

The UCLA Loneliness Scale has been widely used in loneliness research. Scores are based on 20 items with a four-point likert scale ranging from 'never' to 'often'. The scale consists of 10 positively worded statements (1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 15, 16, 19, 20) reflecting satisfaction with social relationships and 10 negatively worded statements (2, 3, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18) reflecting dissatisfaction with social relationships.

Life satisfaction was assessed using Diener et al.'s (1985) SWLS. The five items of this scale were rated on 35 items with a five-point likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree).

The data were collected in approximately 15 minutes from students in their classroom. The students were made necessary explanation about the scales. Students answered the questions themselves.

## Results

According to the results, there is a significant relationship between life satisfaction ( $M=20,15$ ) and loneliness ( $M=38,72$ ) ( $r = -.222$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). If the level of life satisfaction increases, the level of loneliness decreases (Table 1 & 2).

Results according to the Multiple regression analyse, there is a significant relationship between demographic variables and loneliness and little significant relationship between demographic variables and the level of life satisfaction ( $R=0.542$ ,  $R^2=0.293$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ) (Table 3). All independent variables explain %29 of total variance of life satisfaction. The level of class, the structure of family, the number of sister and brother, level of income affects life satisfaction. The variable of level of income and the fact of suicide has an important effect on life satisfaction.

## Discussion

There is a significant relationship between life satisfaction and loneliness. Results according to the Multiple Regression Analyze, there is a significant relationship between demographic variables and loneliness and little significant relationship between demographic variables and the level of life satisfaction. All independent variables explain %29 of total variance of life satisfaction.

As a result of literature review, in a study, nursing students associated with the life satisfaction and loneliness degree, could not be found. However, Kaynar and et al. (2006) researched satisfaction level of nursing students in Trabzon Health School. 289 nursing students, who were in their 1., 2., 3. and 4. grades were involved in this research. The result of the research was found that the students did not satisfy their education process.

In a survey related to loneliness was found a relation which is between psychological problems of the young adulthood such as anxiety, stress and depression and loneliness (Taniguchi and Ura, 2002). This study was investigated for the level of loneliness of nursing students. So benefit programs can be organized for likely psychologic problems of nursing students.

An another research, the sample of this study consisted of 316 university students in total (Odacı, 2004). This study was to observe the relationship between loneliness levels and coping with stress styles of university students. It was found that while the loneliness levels of the students were getting higher, the levels of avoiding the problem were higher in parallel; however, the levels of looking for a social support and approaching the problem became low. However, this research results show that whether or not the family of the suicide cases and socio-economic level affects life satisfaction of nursing students. Therefore universities are required to have sufficient information about their students.

Nursing students are quite important for the health of people. This research indicates that several social programs should be conducted for improving life satisfaction and increasing loneliness degree of nursing students. For this reason, especially universities should concerned enough with whole life of their students (their past and present experiences etc.) In addition, psychological support should be provided for encountering problems. Creating social activities can help reduce loneliness degree of the students and be acquainted with each other easily.

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Table 1

## Means And Std. Deviations Of Loneliness And Life Satisfaction

|                      | Mean    | Std.<br>Deviation | N   |
|----------------------|---------|-------------------|-----|
| Life<br>Satisfaction | 20,1475 | 6,21192           | 183 |
| Loneliness           | 38,7213 | 6,07408           | 183 |

*Note* Satisfaction With Life Scale is from Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985); UCLA Loneliness Scale is from Russell et al. (1980).

Table 2

## The Correlation Between Loneliness and Life Satisfaction

|                                  |                 | Life Satisfaction | Loneliness |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------|
| Life Satisfaction<br>Correlation | Pearson         | 1                 | -,222(**)  |
|                                  |                 |                   | ,002       |
|                                  | Sig. (2-tailed) | 183               | 183        |
|                                  | N               |                   |            |
| Loneliness<br>Correlation        | Pearson         | -,222(**)         | 1          |
|                                  |                 | ,002              |            |
|                                  | Sig. (2-tailed) | 183               | 183        |
|                                  | N               |                   |            |

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3

The Effect of Life Satisfaction Soccer of Demographic Variables and Loneliness

| Model | R       | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | ,542(a) | ,293     | ,244              | 5,40285                    |

a Predictors: (Constant), class, mother and fathers' level of education, the structure of family, the number of sister and brother, level of income, the fact of suicide, the living is in Uşak, the work style and loneliness.